

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-25 have been rejected.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8-12, 14-16, 18, 19, 21, 23 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by "RFC 2866". Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With respect to amended claim 1, the cited art fails to anticipate, teach, or suggest creating a unique session identifier for a user, wherein the unique session identifier is unique with respect to a plurality of network access servers; and providing the unique session identifier to an Authentication, Authorization, and Accounting (AAA) module, wherein each of the network access servers is configured to request AAA processing from the AAA module.

In the rejection of the previous version of claim 1, the Office Action cites sections 1.2, 2, and 5.5 of RFC 2866. These sections recite, in part:

"Each service provided by the NAS to a dial-in user constitutes a session, with the beginning of the session defined as the point wherein service is first provided and the end of the session defined as the point where service is ended. A user may have multiple sessions in parallel or series if the NAS supports that, with each session generating a separate start and stop accounting record with its own Acct-Session-Id." (Section 1.2, definition of "session").

"When a client is configured to use RADIUS Accounting, at the start of service delivery it will generate an Accounting Start packet describing the type of service being delivered and the user it is being delivered to, and will send that to the RADIUS Accounting server, which will send back an acknowledgement that the packet has been received." (Section 2)

[The Acct-Session-Id] attribute is a unique Accounting ID to make it easy to match start and stop records in a log file. The start and stop records for a given session MUST have the same Acct-Session-Id. An Accounting-Request packet MUST have an Acct-Session-Id." (Section 5.5).

These sections of RFC 2866 describe that a NAS can provide services to dial-in users in the form of sessions, and that each Accounting-Request packet must have an Acct-Session-Id. The Office Action appears to be equating the Acct-Session-Id with the session ID recited in claim 1. In contrast to claim 1, however, the cited sections of RFC 2866 neither teach nor suggest that the

Acct-Session-Id is unique with respect to a plurality of network access servers. Instead, the cited sections of RFC 2866 simply state that, for a given NAS, each session will have its own Acct-Session-Id.

Furthermore, these sections of the RFC also fail to teach or suggest an arrangement in which the Acct-Session-Id is provided to an Authentication, Authorization, and Accounting (AAA) module that receives AAA processing requests from each of several network access servers. Instead, the cited sections of RFC 2866 simply describe a scenario in which a single NAS interacts with an AAA module.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, as are dependent claims 3-4. Claims 6-12, 14-16, 18-19, 21, and 23-24 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

It is further noted that the cited art would not be expected to teach or suggest a system in which a session ID is unique with respect to several network access servers. As noted in the background sections of Applicants' specification, existing systems (e.g., as illustrated in FIGs. 1A and 1B of Applicants' specification) operated in situations in which it is "possible for the AAA server 30a to receive n session id values, where each of the n session id values corresponds to a different NAS 28 but is the same number. The AAA server 30a can easily handle this condition because the AAA server 30a associates each session id value with the corresponding NAS 28 based upon a unique NAS address for each NAS. Because each of these duplicative session id's is coming from a different NAS address, the AAA Server 30a can distinguish between the NAS's 28a-28n when managing the sessions involved." Specification, p. 10. Thus, existing techniques were available to handle the situation in which multiple network access servers communicated the same session identifier to the same AAA server. None of the cited art expresses any need for the feature recited in claim 1, in which a session identifier is unique with respect to multiple network access servers.

Nevertheless, in the Response to Arguments section of the Final Office Action, the Examiner states that that above arguments are not persuasive. In particular, the Examiner states that, in view of the description of prior art systems in the specification of the present application:

"the prior art teaches that the AAA server is able to distinguish which NAS or network access server the session ID is coming from based on the NAS's address even though the session ID is the same. Therefore, each session between the AAA server and the corresponding NAS is unique because the AAA server can

delineate between the NASes. Therefore, the Applicant's admission strengthens the Examiner's position that generating a unique session identifier which is unique to a plurality of access servers exists in the prior art. Therefore, this limitation as claimed cannot be the basis for patentability." Final Office Action, page 3 (emphasis in original).

The Examiner appears to be concluding that, because an AAA server could distinguish among identical session identifiers by delineating among the different NASes, the prior art necessarily teaches providing a session identifier, which is unique with respect to a plurality of network access servers, to an AAA module. However, such a conclusion is not supported by the actual teachings of the cited art.

While the AAA server described in the background section of Applicants' specification can distinguish among sessions, that does not mean that the AAA server has been provided with a session ID that is unique with respect to a plurality of NASes. In other words, the fact that each session is unique (as emphasized by the Examiner) has nothing to do with whether a session identifier that is unique with respect to a plurality of NASes has been provided to an AAA module. Instead, as clearly described in the background sections of Applicants' specification, it simply means that the AAA server has an alternative mechanism to differentiate between sessions that are identified by the same session identifier. Thus, the background sections of Applicants' specification, both alone and in combination with the cited portions of RFC 2866, clearly does not teach providing a session identifier, which is unique with respect to a plurality of NASes, to a AAA module, as recited in claim 1.

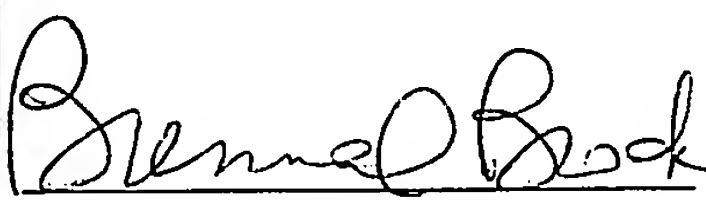
Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over "RFC 2866." Claims 2, 7, 13, 17, 20, 22 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over "RFC 2866" in view of Applicant's admitted prior art. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. These claims are patentable over the cited art for reasons similar to those provided above with respect to claim 1.

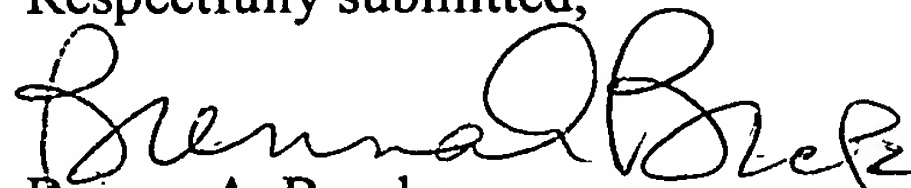
CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5087.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on February 14, 2006.

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Attorney for Applicant(s) Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



Brenna A. Brock

Attorney for Applicants

Reg. No. 48,509

(512) 439-5087 [Phone]

(512) 439-5099 [Fax]